



# State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education  
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509  
Country Inn & Suites  
5353 North 27th  
Lincoln, NE  
August 14, 2007  
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under “conferences & meetings” at least 5 days prior to each meeting.**

**Present:** *Debra Bauer, Sharon Bloechle, Linda Douglas, Katie Durfee, Alvin Fox, Gayle Hahn, Sandy Ham, Jay Ice, Jason Kerkman, Les Kimmons, Frank Lloyd, Larry Niemeyer, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Mark Schultz, Pearl Van Zandt, Merwyn Vavrina, and Terry Lee Wilson. Also attending as SRC nominees Mitch Arnold & Angela Smith.*

**Absent:** *Marc Hultine, Michael Newman*

Minutes by *Sherlyn Nitzsche*

Gayle Hahn called the meeting to order. New nominees were announced. Angela Smith, Mitch Arnold, and Sue Gieschen. Don noted that new members are not official and cannot vote yet pending approval from the state board.

## I Public Comment/Announcements

Don commented on the schedule of meetings. The new meeting room did not work out for the October meeting. November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2007 is the new meeting date. The December meeting has been canceled. A new meeting schedule will be distributed to all Council members.

Frank thanked each member going off of the Council for all of their hard work and presented each of them with a certificate from VR. Those people included Sandy Ham, Merwyn Vavrina, and Mark Schultz.

## II. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Pearl Van Zandt to approve the agenda. Alvin Fox seconded the motion. The agenda was accepted by unanimous consent.

## III. Approval of minutes from June 12, 2007

Motion made by Sharon Bloechle to approve the June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007 minutes. Pearl Van Zandt seconded the motion. The minutes were accepted by unanimous consent.

## IV Old Business

A. None

## V. New Business

### A. Rule 72 Discussion (*Don Crouch, Frank Lloyd*)

Don explained Rule 72 which is VR's Rule in the Department of Education. The Rule is law and needs to be followed. Revising Rule 72 is very difficult and lengthy. The Rule is being revised at this time. VR formed a committee to look at the Rule and to suggest changes to the Rule. The Council has a copy of the new draft. The Council and staff can still give VR input. Public meetings will also be held for any public comment and input.

The major things that have changed in the Rule are as follows:

1. No longer require cost sharing for consumers
2. Clarification on vehicle purchase: The policy will say that we will help purchase vehicles in the area of self employment only. There was discussion about language in the Rule allowing for exceptions. The number of vehicles and VR's budget are of great concern. Mark suggested using the Easter Seals loan program for vehicle purchase. Gayle also suggested PASS plans. The Client Services Committee will discuss and come up with some recommendations.
3. Removal of federal language: The VR Federal Regulations cannot be changed through the state rule making process so it is not appropriate to include them.
4. Now offering three ways that a consumer can purchase something.
- 5 The Rule will also clarify that VR can purchase ATV's & UV's and help with licensing and insurance on other vehicles.
6. The Rule will also clarify that VR is allowed to help pay for summer school.

Frank commented on cost sharing: There are people in the middle and upper class that have contributed by taxes to our program and do not even know who we are and what VR is about. They also have the right to services as do people in poverty. VR does not want our program to serve just people in poverty – middle class and upper class also have a right to our services.

### B. Columbus Consumer Satisfaction Survey Update (*Larry Niemeyer*)

21 people have completed the Consumer Satisfaction Survey. The system is very user friendly and the program worked well. Responses and comments were all positive. These results may vary in the planning process when you get into more controversial issues. We may need to have another survey after the planning session. The Council will have access to summary information and comments. The Columbus Office is doing this routinely.

Motion made by Les Kimmons that VR continue implementing the online consumer satisfaction survey & expand it as appropriate statewide. Seconded by Kipp Ransom. Motion was accepted by unanimous consent.

### C. On-line Interpreter Scheduling & New Licensing Requirements for Interpreters (*Tanya Wendel, Cindy Woldt*)

State agencies are now required to use licensed interpreters effective September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007. The Nebraska Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing will maintain a roster of

licensed interpreters. Thanks to VR funds there is now a web based referral system for interpreters. The system will save on phone calls and is pretty user friendly. The system was demonstrated for the Council members and serves the entire state.

D. School Survey Recommendations (*Jack Shepard*)

After a review of the survey results, the State Rehabilitation Council submits the following recommendations to Nebraska Vocational Rehabilitation.

Results of the survey indicate Nebraska schools are highly supportive of Voc Rehab's efforts in the provision of transition services to students. The results indicate an overall high degree of satisfaction with the nature and scope of services, and the commitment of VR staff to this effort.

Recommendations:

1. Staff turnover and assignment changes impact the continuity of services for schools and students. Efforts to minimize the impact of staff changes should be identified and considered for implementation.
2. VR staff should make every effort to establish and maintain a set schedule of visits and activities with each school they are assigned to.
3. Parental involvement is critical to the success of students during the transition process. Strategies should be developed to improve outreach efforts to parents in order to gain greater support for the efforts of the school and Voc Rehab.
4. Survey results indicate many schools do not refer students with a 504 Plan or other students with physical disabilities. Efforts should be developed to increase the number of 504/physical disability referrals to VR.
5. Coordination of planning and communication among partners is critical to the transition process. School staff value VR's attendance and participation in the IEP process, but acknowledge attendance is often not feasible or appropriate. Alternative methods of IEP participation or input should be explored to include electronic input.
6. Although school staff value the wide range of services VR can provide, primary efforts should focus on employment and connecting students to employers.

Linda Douglas made a motion that VR follow the six recommendations. Seconded by Terry Wilson. Motion accepted by unanimous consent.

E. Election of 2008 Officers

A slate of officers was offered to the Council by the Executive Committee:

Chairperson: Gayle Hahn

Vice Chairperson: Sharon Bloechle

Executive Committee: Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Pearl Van Zandt

Motion made by Pearl Van Zandt to approve the slate as read. Linda Douglas seconded the motion. Motion accepted by unanimous consent.

VI. Reports

A. Committee Reports

### 1. Client Services Committee (*Les Kimmons*)

The Client Services Committee made a motion that the consumer online survey on Employment Discussions be implemented statewide by Nov 14<sup>th</sup> or at least before the end of the year. Seconded by Merwyn Vavrina. Motion accepted by unanimous consent.

Motion made by Client Services Committee that the VR agency develop a customer satisfaction survey to assess the effectiveness of the IPE planning process. Seconded by Merwyn Vavrina. Motion accepted by unanimous consent.

Vehicle purchase: Reaffirm that the agency reconsider the exception statement in the Rule. Merwyn Vavrina will be a part of the Rule 72 Committee to help develop criteria for the exception statement in the Rule. All members should be responsible for looking at the Rule to make recommendations.

### 2. Employer Services Committee (*Sandy Ham*)

Update from Jim on the informational breakfast for Senators: Located two Senators, Gwen Howard and Ray Aguilar, the SRC could ask to lead this. Tammy, our contact at the Capital, suggested having this be a lunch instead of a breakfast. She also suggested having a video – nothing lengthy, maybe a loop video. Have a short program so there will be a chance to talk to SRC members. Send out an invitation and RSVP – have a definite start & stop time.

LB300, (the bill allowing for state agencies to hire VR clients temporarily without counting them towards their allotted number of employees): Has stalled out. Action needs to be taken in 2008 or it will die in committee.

The Transition Scholarship Program: Three businesses have returned and nine others have signed up for the program for the school year 2007-2008. Jim anticipates an additional one or two more businesses will join the program this year.

### 3. Transition Services Committee (*Linda Douglas*)

See ‘D’ under New Business.

Jack also showed the new marketing materials. These materials included the new tabletop transition poster, the poster size for schools to put up in the hallways, and also the black folder developed for students. There was a suggestion that posters for the scholarship program can also be developed.

## B. Director’s Report (*Frank Lloyd*)

1. **Emerging Leaders Project.** We completed our first meeting with the 36 members of the Emerging Leaders Group. We met with 12-13 members in one of three one-day discussions. Currently we are working with State Personnel to provide training to each emerging leader in the use of the Gallup Strengths Finder instrument. Training will start this fall.

2. ***iChat* New Staff.** This project is going well. We have a 10-15 minute *iChat* session with each new employee during their 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> month of employment. These *iChat* sessions are scheduled during a 2-hour block of time once a month. We have received positive responses from new staff about the contacts. They also give Margy and me an opportunity to talk personally with each employee at least 4 times during their first year of employment.
3. **Juvenile Justice Partnership in Lincoln.** For 5 or more years we have had a very successful program with HHS and Omaha Public Schools with our Juvenile Justice Partnership in Omaha. More than 160 of the juveniles have prepared for and received their GED through this program and have gone on to secure employment. Joni Minor, VR Rehab Specialist, has been instrumental in developing this program and assuring its success. Joni is working with Lincoln VR staff and HHS Juvenile Justice staff to explore the feasibility of setting up a similar program in Lincoln.
4. **Madonna Project Update.** Currently we have 3 staff working part-time with Madonna Rehabilitation Center serving many of their patients including those with TBI. Reports indicate that the Madonna staff are pleased with the progress of the partnership. Madonna is open to the idea of VR setting up several on-the-job evaluation sites at Madonna for patients as well as some other VR consumers who are not patients at Madonna. Madonna has offered to provide disability training at some of our local offices that will be very valuable as we look for more opportunities to serve consumers who experience physical impairments.
5. **Multimedia Projects Update.** Kelli Funk has developed two new training videos for new staff. These are part of our “just in time training” for new staff which they can view at their computer workstation at the appropriate time in their training. The one video is “New Hire Computer Basic Training.” The other is “HELPS Presentation,” the brief screening tool, used with all new consumers to determine if the consumer may be experiencing a brain injury. Keri Bennett developed the training material and serves as a statewide resource for staff who have questions about consumers who experience Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). Kelli will present brief excerpts from these two new videos at the November 14<sup>th</sup> SRC meeting.
6. **New Staff Training Update.** The New Staff Training Committee will be surveying all new staff and office directors that have been using the new training materials. Extensive resources have been developed and are available at the employee’s computer workstation. SRC members will get the results of the survey at the November 14, 2007 SRC meeting.
7. **Omaha West Office Move.** The Omaha West team has moved to their new location at 120<sup>th</sup> and Q. The office is very open with staff workstations encircling a large work area for clients and staff to do vocational planning, resource searches, and placement planning. The staff have been hearing from consumers, parents and educators that they appreciate having VR services in their area and don’t have to travel to the State Office Building downtown where off-street parking is required.
8. **Publications.** The “Discover the Job that Works for You” booklet has been updated. Discovery Activity 1: Work Interests has been simplified where a brief description of the interest area includes a list of sample jobs. The Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) is included in the booklet with perforations so it can be

removed and copied for the consumer. The Hotline for Disability Services resource planning sheet is retained but perforated so it can be removed and given to the consumer. The IPE Terms were shortened and perforated so they can be removed and given to the consumer. This is a regulatory requirement. Over all the booklet is better organized to facilitate good vocational planning while focusing on critical employment factors as well as the resources needed to increase the likelihood that the consumer will be successful.

Sandy will present a few other new publications at the SRC meeting including: (1) a new transition folder, (2) a transition display unit and companion poster to be displayed at the school, (3) a parent display photograph with the message “From your home to . . . on their own.”

9. ***RSA Monitoring Goal – Consumer Satisfaction.*** This goal requires that we implement a statewide consumer satisfaction survey following the Employment Discussion. Secondly, it requires that we expand this survey approach to other VR processes by September 30, 2008. At our August 14<sup>th</sup> SRC meeting, Larry Niemeyer, supervisor of the Columbus office, will report on the early findings of their use of the web-based survey that has been developed for consumer input after the Employment Discussion.
10. ***RSA Monitoring Goal – Employment Outcomes.*** This goal requires that VR identify and implement strategies and processes to achieve a rehabilitation rate of 65% or higher. The national standard is 55.8% that means that for each 100 consumers who start services (an IPE was developed and approved) at least 55.8% of the consumers were successfully employed.

VR Program Directors will be conducting a case review of unsuccessful outcomes. This will give us insights to improve our consumer services and processes that will increase the number of consumers who achieve a successful employment outcome. Other activities are being explored to increase our rehab rate to 65% or higher.

11. ***RSA Monitoring Goal – Employment Services.*** This goal includes development of Transition Scholarships with at least 14 employers by September 30, 2008. Currently all 14 VR employment teams are identifying or are working with employers who will be offering transition scholarships. The second part of the Employment Services goal includes each team targeting a selected employer for future job placements. This effort is underway. The last part of this goal requires that we demonstrate that outcomes with “targeted employers” are better than non-targeted employers in terms of wages and benefits.
12. ***RSA Monitoring Goal – Employment Warranty®*** This goal required that we establish a process to monitor the Employment Warranty (EW) program statewide. Currently this is performed by a former staff person for the three Lincoln office teams. The monitoring process will be expanded to be contracted to one or two former employees statewide and not performed by each team as it is currently. Enhancements will be made in the automated part of the EW process to assure that we have appropriate data to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of this approach.

13. ***RSA Monitoring Goal – Transition Services.*** All transition students are now required to have a student ID number in the VR data system. The number is available from the student's school record. This student number will help us achieve the RSA Monitoring Goal to: Develop a system for collecting and reporting measurement data on (1) Graduation rate, (2) Employment rate, (3) Postsecondary education rate, and (4) Transfer into the Employment Program rate. This will involve combining data from the VR data files and the appropriate NDE school data files. The student ID number is the key to this transfer of data. The goal must be accomplished by September 30, 2008.

C. CAP Report (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

The CAP Report was distributed with the SRC packet.

Vicki also mentioned that the Hotline for Disability Services brochure and the CAP brochure have now been combined into one brochure.

D. SILC Report (*Alvin Fox*)

Alvin reported on the NE IL Monitoring Goals: To improve communication and collaboration between the SILC, the DSU's, the CIL's, and IL Part B service providers in Nebraska.

E. ATP Report (*Mark Schultz*)

Mark gave the Council an update on the new referral process from VR. There have been 477 referrals so far this year. This is almost twice as many as last year. New staff have been hired in Omaha and Columbus. Angela has been working in the area of transition. She has created a blog site and is getting information out there about several learning issues.

The Youth First Conference in Kearney was a great success. VR is providing funding for additional conferences in eastern and western Nebraska.

A reminder for Committee chairpersons to submit their reports for the annual SRC report. The annual report deadline is the end of December.

Meeting adjourned.